

RECKLESS RALPH'S

# DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers. Published by RALPH F. CUMMINGS, Box 75, Fisherville, Mass. U.S.A.

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## WHAT I KNOW ABOUT ASSORTED NOVELS.

By Stewart H.V. Bender.

Dime Novels are of really more logical sense than the collecting of stamps, for I believe that collections in Philately and Numismatics can show very little of the real life of our forefathers and the various modes of living. Let me be a little bit more explicit on this subject of novels.

For instance, we take Pluck and Luck that carries in its library, stories of every type of adventure and life in the world, from medieval days to modern eras. Altho strictly fiction, it must describe things and doings that practically executed every day in various parts of the world.

Next we take Fame and Fortune. Throughout this library the theme and plots were practically all of the money-making activities of the youth, extending from 1900 to about 1915 in Wall Street, our great financial center, and other places including mines, Transportation (both water and land), and in real Estate, etc. These novels therefore give to our growing generation, the principles by which our great financiers and business men of this age, got their start in life.

Next we take up Secret Service Novels created by Mr. Doughty who was one of the great



writers of the detection of criminals, and of the modes of identification and police methods of his days, unless excepting Mr. Frederick VanRensselaer Day, author of our popular Nicholas Carter Novels. Both Mr. Day and Mr. Doughty gave to the reading public in very interesting form, stories of what the police of their day had to contend with. And he wrote his story in true form to the existing laws and conditions of those days.

Next we take up the James Boys Weekly, altho a novel which at the time of its publication set parents frantic in an effort to curtail and refrain their sons from reading them. They gave to the world, in a practical way, the various methods and means by which bandits of those days terrorized their neighbors with their wanton murders and thievery, and also the human side of those men aggravated by their very atmosphere of living, to a life of crime, and also of the ultimate price which they and all men of a criminal turn of mind, come to, eventually.

Next we take up a Frank Roade. We look at the cover, and say "Impossible", Who ever heard of taking flight in the air, or of a horseless carriage contraption that would actually run--but now we take a very different version of these novels. Now we must by proven fact, treat them as a prediction of coming events. The author was simply 30 years ahead of his readers. In fact he had a vision ahead of him that those things were not impossible. We have aviation, monstrous ships, submarines, machine guns, and a telescope that when completed, will detect life on Mars'. In reality, I beleive that those novels in an indirect way may have given the inventors a foundation on which to work out their ideas and dreams.

Next we take up the Boys of '76, Blue and



That is seated by the sea;  
Often in thoughts run up and down  
The pleasant streets of that dear old town  
And my youth comes back to me."

--Longfellow.

"Dot, I wish I could buy Liberty Boys cheaper than 5¢ apiece."

"You can. There is a store right beside the Lynn theatre where you can get back numbers two for a nickel."

"Can you really? It is a long way up there, but I think I'll walk up there, Saturday. I have a nickel. Can you buy all the old numbers?"

"Most of them."

"Did you ever read 'The Liberty Boys and the Dwarf, or, A Dangerous Enemy?' (No. 117)"

"Sure. It was about this terrible dwarf. He was so strong that he could bend a musket. He captured Dick Slater and held him prisoner. Then, when the Liberty Boys surrounded him, he grabbed Bob Estabrook and was going to throw him into a 'no-bottom' hole. After they killed the dwarf, Dick held a lantern down the hole and could see, caught on the ragged edges of rocks and roots, rags torn from the clothes of people whom the dwarf had thrown down there." (For the last, Dot drew on his imagination, as I afterwards read the story, and no mention was made of this).

The above conversation took place in the year 1905. Lynn, Mass., the scene of my early boyhood days, was but an overgrown town that was fast becoming a metropolis. Three-deckers were creeping in here and there to take the place of square frame houses that set back from the street, behind picket or cast-iron fences. Time was going on, and day by day, saw continuous change and growth.

By far one of the most remarkable of my



childhood acquaintances, was "Dot Spratt". His real name was LeRoy Austin and he was one grade ahead of me in school. I never saw, or heard him mention his father. He lived in one room in the downtown section of the city, with his mother, who went to work early in the morning, in a shoe factory, and returned late at night. Dot was left to himself during the day. A far-sighted lad, with an uncanny memory and unlimited imagination, he enjoyed a life that others would find drab and hopeless, by dwelling in a world of his own creation. Down at the foot of Newhall Street, where Washington Street joined at right angles, and close to the shore of the harbor, lived his grandfather, Old Mr. Spratt, and thither Dot would journey every day, spending much of his time, watching the ships that come and go.

The next day I met Dot at school and he took me one side and showed me a new Pluck and Luck. It was a humdinger ! The Gray House on the Rock, or, The Ghosts of Ballantyne Hall (No. 295). The cover picture was well-colored, of a young traveler entering a room of an old mansion, and coming upon a ghostly company doing a polka or minuet. The furnishings and wall hangings visible through their white forms.

"Gee! What are those things, Dot?" I cried.

"Ghosts" answered Dot.

"But how can they be? There are no such things as ghosts."

"I don't know about that, Don. There they are, in the picture."

"But that is only a picture."

"I know, but most of the stuff in these books is true, only the names and places are changed."

"Gee! I wish my dad would let me read Luck and Plucks. All I can read are Liberty Boys



OUR efforts, OUR COOPERATION, and our rooting, are not forthcoming to help them. Now, with the newly-aroused interest in dime novels all over the country, and the fine publicity that various powerful newspapers and magazines have given our hobby, it seems a sin and a shame for us to lay down and let our Brotherhood die. For dying it is, as an organization, and unless we get together and boost it, by obtaining new members and many of them. Many of you know that Brother Smith, publisher of the pioneer novel paper, "Happy Hours", had to resign as H.H.B. president because of lack of support to his paper. In fact, his paper HAD to fold up. Who can blame him?

Brother Cummings, our present head, then took over and started his now-famous "Reckless Ralph's Dime Novel Round-Up", a paper that numbers among its subscribers, various public libraries, colleges, famous personages and writers, not only in this country, but in England as well. Still, comparatively speaking, the paper has a very small circulation, due to lack of funds to enlarge it and extend its scope by putting thousands of sample copies all over the country, as various other papers do, in trying to build up a big subscription list. Now most of you know Cummings, and the efforts he has made to keep H.H.B. together and to keep "the Round-Up" going. But perhaps you don't know the "midnight oil" he has burned in answering your letters after a hard days work (and another ahead for the next day) and his long careful planning to keep "Round-Up" going for even another month, or two, at best. As a matter of fact, many of you have criticized the small issues of "Roundup" that have appeared for the past few months. Would you, as editor and publisher, have kept it even as large, knowing that with issue, you must dig down and make up the deficit out of



your own pocket?

But, as I said before, that's where pure love of the game, comes in. Only a sportsman could do that..Now fellows-Let's get behind this "Round-UP" and PUSH. Let's get our still living members back again, and DON'T STOP there, but keep them in, year after year. Lets not let the stamp and coin collectors get ahead of us. How much publicity are they getting in the papers and magazines ?- Practically none..How much publicity is OUR hobby getting?-Lots ! So let's get behind the "wagon" and PUSH. We owe it to our present head, for his fine sportmanship, and IF WE DON'T-OUR PRESENT BROTHERHOOD IS DOOMED !

P.S.: Our present head and publisher is do d----- modest and conservative, that he will probably throw this manuscript in his waste-basket, thus depriving you fellows from reading "my self-confessed masterpiece".

(Publisher's Note: "Oh Yeah !!!-Not this time-ha, ha, ha!)

### Editorial

We had an awful hard rain storm last nite, the first one in about 3 weeks, and what is not burned up in the gardens, is very near it..Who do you suppose dropped in to see me? None other than Stewart H.V. Bender of Troy, N.Y. and author of the article "What I Know about Assorted Novels", in this issue. Sure was a pleasant surprise. He's a nice sort of fellow, too. He's also our new collector and is sure "very sweet" on the Liberty Boys of '76. He made his first visit on Aug. 21st and I'm hoping it won't be the last, either.

My new address is Box 75, Fisherville, Mass.

To Editor-Ralph F. Cummings.

(This is a REPRINT)



of this paper, we shall discontinue the nom de plume of "Peter Pad" to our comic stories, and it is due to our readers to explain the reasons for this change.

Mr. George G. Small, the original writer, under the name of "Peter Pad" and also of "Bricktop", died in this city, Mar. 10, 1886, but we continued to use the name "Peter Pad" to our comic stories, which were thereafter written by "Sam Smilley", a writer for many years, attached exclusively to our staff.. Mr. Smilley began to write under the name "Peter Pad" in No. 367 of this paper, issue of June 12, 1886, which contained Chapter 9 of the story, "Those Quiet Twins", the first eight chapters of which were written by Mr. Small, previous to his death. Since that time, Mr. Smilley has written all the comic stories published in the B.O.N.Y.-Viz: "A Rolling Stone"-The Shortys/Christmas Rackets"- "Jack Ready's School Scrapes"- "Smart & Co."- "The Shorty's Christmas Party"- "The Shorty's Minstrels"- "Little Tommy Bounce"- "Little Tommy Bounce on his Travels"- "The Deacon's Boy"- "Johnny Brown & Co."- "Bonny Bounce"- "Young Dick Plunkett"- "The Shortys on the Road"- "Sam Smart, Jr."- "and "Out for Fun". He has now concluded to write under his own name, and hereafter, all the comic stories in this paper will be published under the name of Sam Smilley, and the name "Peter Pad" will be discontinued.. All stories which in the future, may appear in any other publication under that name (Peter Pad) are spurious imitations and we caution our readers to beware of them.

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ODDS & ENDS.

BILLY THE KID: A new book, called "The Gambler's Man"; the newspaper write-up is as follows; "After William Bonney (Billy, the



Kid, to you) shot his way out of the Lincoln County jail (N.Mex.) E.B.Mann tells us, he got completely away, and was not shot at the Maxwell House by Pat Garrett, as history assures us. The facts of the Lincoln County cattle-war, form a background of killings and revenge, to this half-fact half-fiction Western tale.

THE RANGERS RIDE ONCE MORE: Yes-sah, we mean the Texas two-gun Rangers. They have re-organized and are as big as life, according to a Sunday feature supplement of Mar. 31st; thrillingly illustrated in colors. Disbanded two years ago, the famed fighting men are back in their saddles again, by order of Texas' new governor. The story reads like an epic, and one is positively convinced that the romance of the Old West is far from being "as dead as a mackerel". Law and Order must prevail, and again, their red-hot shootin' rods will dispense the remedy in no uncertain terms. Long may the Texas Rangers roam the plains, the mountain fastnesses, and the valleys, wreaking gun-vengeance on all evil doors. (Sent in by Bob Smoltzer).

NICK CARTER: In eight lines at the bottom of a New Bedford daily, was given the news of the death of Frederick W. Davis, 74, author of the wonderful, thrilling Nick Carter stories of our youth. So it goes..What a hero was Nick Carter, the Great Detective, to us, and what a villain he was, to our parents-"those awful dime novels". How well we remember hiding those paper-bound thrillers under stair-treads, behind books in the bookcase, and even up an old flue. "Diamond Dick"- "Boys of '76"-and "Old Sleuth"-where are they now? Even the more polite Rover Boys have disappeared; and now-the greatest of them all, has passed away with an eight-line obituary..So long, Nick Carter !